

JUDGES

ISRAEL IN CAANAN

THE NAME: "JUDGES"

- * Hebrew Name - Shophtim "Judges or Deliverers"
- * Judges is named for the 13 characters God raised up prior to the time of Samuel to deliver Israel from assorted oppressors.
- * They were designated with the title "judge" in Judges 2:11-19.
- * But, the judges were actually called "deliverers," not "judges"
- * The judges did not oversee merely legal matters, as in our sense of the role; their tasks often included military and administrative authority as well.

AUTHORSHIP & FACTS

- * Jewish tradition names the prophet Samuel as the author
- * The author of Judges certainly lived in the early days of the monarchy.
- * The recurring statement, "in those days there was no king in Israel" (**Judges 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25**), points out a contrast between the events happening in the book and the time of its writing.

Date of Writing: The Book of Judges was likely written between 1045 and 1000 B.C.

CHAPTERS: 21

VERSES: 618

ITS PLACE IN HISTORY

- * The period of the judges began after the death of Joshua in the early 14th century BC ([Joshua 24:29](#))
- * It continued for a period of about 300 years. until Saul was crowned king of Israel by the prophet Samuel in 1051 BC ([1 Samuel 10:24](#))
- * Events within the book of Judges span the geographical breadth of the nation, happening in a variety of cities, towns, and battlefields.
- * Scholars believe some of the judges ruled simultaneously in separate geographical regions.

OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

- * The first two chapters deal with the death of Joshua and after his death and the generation surrounding him, "there arose another generation after them, who did not know the Lord or the work which he had done for Israel" (Judges 2:10).
- * Throughout Judges the fundamental issue is the lordship of God in Israel, especially Israel's acknowledgment of and loyalty to his rule.
- * His kingship over Israel had been uniquely established by the covenant at Sinai (**Exo. 19-24**), which was later renewed by Moses on the plains of Moab (**Deut. 29**) and by Joshua at Shechem (**Josh. 24**).
- * The author accuses Israel of having rejected the kingship of the Lord again and again.
- * They stopped fighting the Lord's battles, turned to the gods of Canaan to secure the blessings of family, flocks and fields, and abandoned God's laws for daily living.

OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

- * The incidents in the entire book run in circles with a pattern:
 1. The Israelites sin.
 2. God punishes them by sending an enemy to oppress them. They serve the enemy for a number of years.
 3. They cry out to God and pray for forgiveness.
 4. God sends a deliverer (judge) to free them.
 5. The judge conquers the enemy.
 6. There is a peaceful reign for some time before the cycle begins again.
- * But with each cycle, the status of the Israelites deteriorates a little more and the moral lines are continually blurred by both the Israelites and the judges.
- * By the end of the book, there is complete anarchy.
- * As the final line states: "**In those days there was no king in Israel?All the people did what was right in their own eyes**" (21:25).

THE LIST OF JUDGES

	NAME OF JUDGE	DESCRIPTION
1	Othniel (3:7-11)	1st Judge after Joshua's death
2	Ehud (3:12-30)	Fought the Moabites
3	Shagmar (3:31)	Led Israelites against the Philistines
4	Deborah (4-5)	Prophetess, guided Barak to victory over the Canaanites, only female judge
5	Gideon (6-8)	Defeated Midianites with 300 men
6	Abimelech (9)	Only judge to win leadership through treachery
7	Tola (10:1-5)	Judged Israel for 23 years
8	Jair (10:1-5)	Judged Israel for 22 years
9	Jepthah (10:17-12:7)	Defeated Ammonites
10	Ibzan (12:8-15)	Judged people for 7 years
11	Elon (12:8-15)	Judge for 10 years
12	Abdon (12:8-15)	Ruled for 8 years
13	Samson (13-16)	Fought Phillistines singlehandedly
14	Eli (1 Samuel 1:9)	Priest, ruled people from the sanctuary at Gilo
15	Samuel	Last judge before the kingdom came under the rule of Saul

THE 3 “FOREIGN” GODS



BAAL



ASHERAH



DAGON

THE 3 "FOREIGN" GODS

- * The major social problem stemmed from the recurrent failure of the Israelites to drive the Canaanites out of the land, a direct violation of God's commandment.
- * The Israelites then intermarried with the Canaanites, adopting many of their customs.
- * This assimilation of Canaanite culture promoted the growth of idolatry which constituted the religious problem of the people.

The three most prominent deities of Canaanite worship:

1. Baal

- * **Baal** was usually represented by a stone pillar and was a god of fertility, usually worshipped in the groves.
- * At various times Baal-worship included fornication (Jeremiah 7:9), self-mutilation (1 Kings 18:28), and human sacrifice (Jeremiah 19:5).
- * Baal is the deity most often mentioned in the Old Testament as being a snare for the people of God.

2. The symbol of Asherah

- * The symbol of **Asherah** was a wooden post set up in the "high places" of idolatrous worship.
- * The Phoenician goddess of procreation and love, she was the chief female deity and is often mentioned in connection with Baal.

3. Dagon

- * **Dagon** was a Philistine deity having the body of a fish with human hands and a human face.
- * It was a temple of Dagon which Samson pulled down in his final act of strength.

THE 6 INVASIONS

- * There is seen in the book of Judges a consistent pattern Israel is oppressed by a foreign power;
- * the people cry to God and he raises up a judge to deliver them from their predicament;
- * after peace is established the people become complacent and relapse into idolatry.

1. Mesopotamian invasion from the northeast (Judges 3:8-11)

- * The first was the Mesopotamian invasion from the northeast from which Othniel delivered his people.

2. Moabite Invasion from the southeast (Judges 3:12-20)

- * The second was by the **Moabites** and came from the southeast.
- * Israel was delivered from the Moabites by **Ehud**, the left handed assassin of the Moabite king, Eglon.

3. Canaanite leaders Jabin and Sisera (Judges 4, 5)

- * The third invasion came under the **Canaanite leaders Jabin and Sisera**.
- * Israel was delivered from the Canaanites by **Deborah**, the only recorded woman judge.
- * It is interesting to note that Sisera himself was killed by a woman, Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite.

THE 6 INVASIONS

4. The Midianite Invasion from the southeast (Judges 6-9)

- * The **Midianite invasion** from the southeast lasted 7 years and was ended under the bold leadership of **Gideon**.

5. Ammonite Invasion from the east (Judges 10:6-11:40)

- * The foolish vow of Jephthah, which cost him the life of his daughter, came after he delivered Israel from the fifth invasion, that by the **Ammonites from the east**.

6. The Philistines invasion from the southwest (Judges 13)

- * The sixth invasion was by the **Philistines**, from the southwest, and was apparently something of a recurrent nature rather than one particular campaign.
- * During a period of at least 200 years, Israel was delivered from the Philistines by **Shamgar, Samson, Samuel, Saul, and David**.

GRUESOME EVENTS

- * The most shocking feature in the book of Judges, therefore, is not the horror of the sin of God's people depicted in these narratives,
- * Ehud murders Eglon and leaves him to rot in his own fecal matter.
- * Jephthah sacrifices his only daughter as a burnt offering because of a vow he had made to the Lord.
- * Samson spends a night with a prostitute.
- * A Levite cuts up his concubine who had been brutally raped to death in the night and sends her dismembered body throughout Israel to incite war.
- * But the glory of salvation from that sin accomplished by the God of patience, mercy, compassion, steadfast love, and faithfulness ([Ex. 34:6](#)).
- * The terror of sin is outshined only by the glory of God's salvation worked through these judges, who will somehow point us to Jesus Christ.

THE FALLEN STATE OF GOD'S PEOPLE

- * The wilderness generation of Moses and the generation of conquest with Joshua had been eyewitnesses of God's great signs and wonders to save and deliver.
 - * But then "there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel" (**Judg. 2:10**).
 - * In the generations between Joshua and the monarchy, Israel did "what was evil in the sight of the Lord" (**Judg. 2:11**).
-
- * **WHY DID ISRAEL DESCEND INTO SUCH DEPRAVITY?**
 - a. Because the People who saw the ways and wonders of God failed to follow the Lord with all their heart.
 - b. Because they did not TEACH their children the ways and the wonders of GOD as God had commanded them
 - c. Because they did not follow the yearly festivals and weekly ordinance of the Sabbath, which the Lord had ordained for people to REMEMBER Him!

THE FAITHFUL LOVE OF GOD

- * The primary message of Judges is that God will not allow sin to go unpunished.
- * As Exodus established, Israel was God's people—He was their King.
- * They had forsaken the covenant established at Mount Sinai.
- * In Judges, He disciplined them for following other gods, disobeying His sacrificial laws, engaging in blatant immorality, and descending into anarchy at times.
- * Consequently they lost sight of their unique identity as God's people, chosen and called to be his army and the loyal citizens of his emerging kingdom.
- * They settled down and attached themselves to Canaan's peoples along with Canaanite morals, gods, and religious beliefs and practices as readily as to Canaan's agriculture and social life.

WHY DID GOD RECORD HEINOUS ACTS IN THE BIBLE?

- * To show the Depraved and Fallen state of man - who only God can rescue and save.
- * To reveal His compassion and mercy to forgive and restore.
- * To serve as a warning to us

OUTLINE OF “JUDGES”

- Prologue: Incomplete Conquest and Apostasy (1:1–3:6)

Chapter# 1 – Judah & Simeon fight against Canaanites. Judah defeated the Canaanites and took Jerusalem. Joseph takes Bethel but Canaanites not completely driven out.

Chapter# 2 – Warning from God's angel. After Joshua's generation died the Israelites served Baal disobeyed God. God punished by defeating them through their enemies but raised up judges to deliver Israel.

- Oppression and Deliverance (3:7–16:31)

Chapter# 3 – Israel intermarries & worships false gods. Judge Othniel, Ehud & Shamgar deliver Israel from other nations

Chapter# 4 – Israel did evil. King Eglon defeated them. God raised judge Deborah who killed Eglon.

Chapter# 5 – Deborah and Barak sang a victory song to God about battle with kings of Canaan.

Chapter# 6 – Israel did evil, serves Midian 7 yrs. An angel assures Judge Gideon of support. Gideon destroys alter of Baal.

Chapter# 7 – As per God's instructions Gideon sent only 300 men. The 300 crept into the Midianite camp. Gideon's army defeats Midian.

Chapter# 8 – 1st Jealousy of Ephraim quarrels with Gideon. Gideon refuses kingship. Death of Gideon. Israel has peace 40 years, turns from God

Chapter# 9 – Abimelech killed his brothers and ruled over Israel. Gaal rose against him. Woman wound Abimelech; he died

Chapter# 10 Judges Tola and Jair. Israelites did evil. God sold them to the Philistines and the Ammonites. Israel cried to God for help.

OUTLINE OF “JUDGES”

Chapter# 12 - 2nd Jealousy of Ephraim. Gilead defeated Ephraim. Jephthah judges Israel 6 yrs. Judges Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon.

Chapter# 13 - Philistines rule Israel. The angel of God told Manoah's wife that she would conceive a savior. Birth of Samson

Chapter# 14 - Judge Samson seeks a Philistine wife. Killed a lion. Shared a riddle. Samson's wife given to another man.

Chapter# 15 - Samson's Mighty Acts and revenge. Burnt Philistine's crops. Israelites bound him. He killed 1000 Philistines.

Chapter# 16 - Samson escapes from Gaza. Samson loved Delilah. She shave his hairs. He died pulling down the Philistine temple.

- **Epilogue: Religious and Moral Disorder (chs. 17-21)**

Chapter# 17 - Micah's corruption of religion. Micah made an idol from his mothers silver. There was no king so everyone did what was right in their own eyes. Micah appointed a Levite as priest.

Chapter# 18 - The Danites' departure from their tribal territory & Idolatry. Dan sends spies to find land. Danites took Micah's idol and his priest. Conquered Laish, build a city named it Dan.

Chapter# 19 - Gibeah's corruption of morals .A Levite and His Concubine came to Gibeah. The men of the city raped his concubine and she died. The Levite cut up his wife's body and sent a piece to each tribe.

Chapter# 20 - The Benjamites' near removal from their tribal territory. The Israelites gathered to attack Gibeah. 400000 men of Israel fight against Benjamin & defeated. Tribe of Benjamin nearly Destroyed only 600 of them survived.

Chapter# 21 - Israel gathers at Mizpah. Young women given to Benjamin and thus saved it as a tribe.